



# TOWN OF JEROME

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## DRAFT MINUTES

### SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING OF THE TOWN OF JEROME COUNCIL CHAMBERS, JEROME TOWN HALL 600 CLARK STREET, JEROME, ARIZONA

**MONDAY, APRIL 21, 2025, AT 5:00 PM**

#### 5:00 (0:01) 1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mayor/Chairperson to call meeting to order

Town Clerk to call and record the roll.

*Present were Mayor Alex Barber, Vice Mayor Jane Moore, Councilmember Dr. Jack Dillenberg, Issam "Izzy" Sharif and Sonia Sheffield.*

*Staff present included Town Manager/Clerk Brett Klein, Zoning Administrator Will Blodgett, Deputy Clerk Kristen Muenz, Police Chief Rusty San Felice along with several other officers, and Shuttle Driver Scott Kolu.*

#### 2. NEW BUSINESS

Discussion/Possible Action

##### 5:06 (6:21) A. Representatives from Colby and Powell will Present the Firm's Audit of Jerome's Financial Statements for Fiscal Year 2024.

Council may make a motion to accept the FY 2024 Audit findings.

*Town Manager Brett Klein approached the dais to contact Jim Usevitch, CPA of Colby and Powell via the speakerphone. Mr. Usevitch thanked the council for the opportunity and said he would like to point out this year's audit was done in January of 2025, so not only was it done on time, but we were also in a place to get it done well in advance of State deadlines. Mr. Usevitch said we are better off financially compared to last year; it's always better to be in the black rather than red. As for fraud, Colby and Powell found no instances of fraud in any category. They also encountered no difficulties or disagreements in performing the audit. Mr. Usevitch thanked Mr. Klein and Ms. Muenz for their help with the audit as they made the process smooth. He finished by saying the audit went very well, and asked if there were any questions.*

*The Council had no follow-up questions.*

*Dr. Dillenberg thanked Mr. Usevitch for his presentation.*

*Mayor Alex Barber moved to accept the FY2024 findings and Dr. Dillenberg seconded the motion. The vote was taken and was carried unanimously.*

##### Motion to accept the Audit of Jerome's Financial Statements for Fiscal Year 2024

COUNCILMEMBER	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
BARBER	X		X			
DILLENBERG		X	X			
MOORE			X			
SHARIF			X			
SHEFFIELD			X			

##### 5:00 (0:30) B. Appointment and Oath of Office for New Deputy Chief Michael Odle

Chief San Felice will issue the Loyalty Oath of Office and the pinning of the badge and lapel insignia.

*Police Chief Rusty San Felice issued the Loyalty Oath of Office to Michael Odle and Mr. Odle repeated the oath with his right hand raised. There was a round of applause from the members of the council and the audience. Chief San Felice then presented a certificate of promotion to Deputy Chief Odle and shook his hand. Deputy Chief Odle's brother, Mark, and wife Donna approached the dais for the pinning. Chief San Felice mentioned that he crushed his physical fitness and his certification testing as he was in 9top 0% for all categories. Deputy Chief Odle explained that his wife is a retired LAPD officer,*

and his brother a retired captain. The mayor and council congratulated Deputy Chief Odle and thanked his family for attending.

**5:10 (10:03) C. Consideration of a Tour Company Business License Application for Wicked City Tours, LLC**

Council will consider and may approve the tour company business license application.

*Applicant Matthew Moore approached the dais. He said that one item not listed is his insurance, with the town listed as additional insured, which he brought with him, along with an easier to read email.*

*Ms. Moore asked if the insurance met the town's requirements and Mr. Klein replied he had not had a chance to see it yet.*

*Mr. Klein looked and the insurance certificate and responded yes, it was sufficient.*

*Mr. Sharif said he has had a lot of concerns and questions about the tour going behind the "cribs." By introducing tourists back there, there is the potential that they see the residents or interior. He asked if the tour had to go back there.*

*Mr. Moore replied that it was really just to see back of Nelly Bly's because it used to be Belgian Jenny's, to see the windows that used to be doors. He also wanted to show the remainder of the stairwell that used to be back there as wrap up of the red-light district. Mr. Moore said that when he did tours before, it was a standard thing they all did.*

*Mr. Sharif said the business owners are worried that if you take people back there, they may see entry points, so there was some concern. He said that was what was brought to him, that there is nothing in cribs, its leading toward a residential section and there is an entry to a business. Mr. Sharif said that he told the owners he would communicate with Mr. Moore and find out what is going on as he, being new, is not sure if permissions need to be done.*

*Mr. Klein explained that permissions were not necessarily required on public domain, but they were on private property.*

*Mr. Moore replied that if the effected business owners have a problem, then he won't go back there.*

*Mr. Sharif further said that the fear is, by bringing people back there, where they wouldn't normally be, it might tempt them to want to explore; that is the concern.*

*Ms. Moore said that it was brought up to her as well. She said it is a public right of way, and people do park back there. There is nothing stopping tourists from walking back there on their own. Because it is not a residential zone, she does not believe it is an issue. She remembered when the cribs were still standing in Husband's alley.*

*Dr. Dillenberg said that he agreed, and on nights like tonight, from 6-8 you can hear guitar players out on the street, they are in Nellie Bly, and they don't live here. They drive up from Arizona to play their instruments on Monday nights. He repeated it was okay.*

*Ms. Barber asked if he was referring to the ukulele orchestra, and Dr. Dillenberg confirmed this.*

*Ms. Moore suggested that he talk with people about their concerns.*

*Mr. Sharif suggested having conversations with [property owners] to make sure it is all on the up-and-up, and then proceed.*

*Ms. Barber asked for clarification on the map. She pointed to the area by the Flatiron building, going down by the Sliding Jail and then coming back up, she asked if that was correct, to which Mr. Moore indicated it was. She said that is the standard tourist area of town.*

*Dr. Dillenberg moved to approve of the tour business and Ms. Sheffield seconded the motion.*

*Ms. Moore asked, regarding concerns about blocking town rights-of-way, sidewalks, and streets, and asked Mr. Moore to confirm that he was aware that the Town Code mentions you cannot block sidewalks and streets.*

*Ms. Barber asked to elaborate on that point. She said, if you are taking and tour and standing in front of any business in town, and someone else on the sidewalk can't walk through, that is not allowed.*

*She said it has happened before, not with his tour company, but the street is public access. Anything beyond that, including parking lots in that area, is pretty much private property. So, talking to the different business owners about how they feel about walking back there is a great way to make sure everyone is on the same page, and no one is stepping on anyone else's toes.*

*The vote was taken and carried unanimously, and the council thanked Mr. Moore and wished his new business venture luck.*

**Motion to approve the Tour Company Business License for Wicked City Tours, LLC**

COUNCILMEMBER	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
BARBER			X			

DILLENBERG	X		X			
MOORE			X			
SHARIF			X			
SHEFFIELD		X	X			

### 5:18 (17:44) D. Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget Work Session

Council will continue their discussions regarding the 2025-2026 budget, including a review of an initial draft budget. All aspects of the budget may be discussed and

Council may provide staff direction regarding the 2025-2026 budget.

*Ms. Barber asked for clarification that this would not be the final budget discussion.*

*Mr. Klein explained that this was just initial preparation of the budget. He said it was a lot to take in at one time, and by no means should they have been able to digest it all by this meeting, but this is the initial budget put together by staff after the numerous budget meetings and input from the council. He said it was probably best for the council members to work one by one with questions, comments, concerns or issues, so that it can be brought back before the entire council at another time. Mr. Klein said that some of the highlights of this budget are we are continuing for the third year, lessening our reliance on the General Fund Balance. The primary users being Water and Sewer, and they are down significantly from years' past. This budget sought to include all your priorities for capital projects as well as staff that you wish to retain. Mr. Klein added that staff are grateful for the benefit and wage adjustments that the council authorized at the previous meeting. This budget includes it all, and there are numerous grants, including Capital Grants. He explained that we will need to add one that we just received today, and we will receive more for the Center Street & Verde Avenue projects.*

*Ms. Moore asked if the smart water meter grant would be added.*

*Mr. Klein replied that it will be added, and will show as WIFA grants for water meter revenue and expense.*

*Ms. Moore asked if there will be discussion amongst the council as to whether we want them or not.*

*Mr. Klein explained that there will be, but it must be included in the budget, or it shows as a zero. He said that the council will be involved in all aspects of it.*

*Ms. Moore repeated, it is not a done deal, and Mr. Klein said no.*

*Mr. Sharif said they had given a description of how it would save labor, and there will be an opt-out option for somebody who wants to opt out.*

*Ms. Barber said there are only a couple of municipalities in the Verde Valley offering an opt out, everyone else is just making you have the meters. So, offering opt-out option for your property is something that makes everyone happy rather than the State saying you have to do that. She thanked Mr. Sharif for explaining that contingency.*

*Ms. Moore said she has been reading up on smart meters and issues with them. She asked Mr. Klein if she could send that information to him to be given to the rest of the council, to which Mr. Klein said, of course.*

*Dr. Dillenberg said that he wanted to thank the team for putting this together on behalf of the team.*

*Ms. Barber agreed we have a hard-working year ahead of us, a lot of engineering, and seeing stuff happening is definitely something to look forward to. She said she would like to bring up the Freeport McMoRan funding that is due at the end of May, solidified in June, and paid out in July. Do we have anything that we are asking Freeport McMoRan for in grant funds?*

*Mr. Klein said that they are smaller grants, and of course they have been helpful, but his bandwidth has been on the larger infrastructure grants, and we haven't had extra staff time. He acknowledged that we did need funding for improvements on the Civic Center.*

*Ms. Barber said for clarification, the Freeport grant goes directly to community spaces and things that benefit the town as a whole. She feels that it would be a perfect ask for those funds, and she feels that for any money that is on the table, we should put some energy towards asking for it. If we don't get it, we don't get it, but we should never leave any of it on the table, we should always ask.*

*Mr. Sharif asked, with that type of grant funding, could we employ other people to help write grants.*

*We are a small town with few people, and to Mr. Klein's point, he is pretty bogged down, but we could shift personnel to do the work, or find someone to help write those grants.*

*Mr. Klein said that those with the abilities to gather and synthesize the data are quite busy, but Clarkdale has a full-time grant writer, and we could do a time-share with them. Clarkdale would cover the benefits, so that could be a good opportunity/*

Ms. Barber clarified that she didn't mean that to diss anyone who is working hard. She agrees that Mr. Klein is slammed, and appreciates everything he and the staff do; she didn't want it to sound like that, if it did.

Mr. Sharif stated that he did not feel it sounded that way at all, and Mr. Klein confirmed that he did not take it that way.

Ms. Barber agreed that Clarkdale does have a full-time grant writer, and specialties and departments that we don't have. She said we run on a skeleton crew, and she wanted to give props to that skeleton crew, we do a good job with the few people we have, Thank you for all the hard work. Ms. Barber asked, anything else about the budget; anything we want to see added, subtracted?

Ms. Moore said there were smaller things in the projects that she thought the Freeport grant could go to, including work that needs done here, and retaining walls.

Mr. Klein replied we have a must-do project we are determining who is responsible for.

Ms. Barber asked if he already had a projects list with them listed.

Mr. Klein answered yes, in your budget packet. We are just starting, so please give a little grace, but eventually we will have professionalization of our Capital Improvement Plan. He said there are pictures included, and they are listed by high, medium, and low priority.

Mr. Sharif asked about the numbers listed as revenue sources, as an example, the sewer grant fund, which is listed as USDA funds expected for 2026. He asked, is that when the funding is landing?

Mr. Klein replied that's when we will be expending the funds, sometimes there is a lag.

Dr. Dillenberg thanked Mr. Klein and said he was glad that Holly Avenue was on the list.

Ms. Barber said that was why she asked about a list, because it is a lot of information to digest, where a list created bullet points.

Mr. Klein said the program does produce that, yes, both summary and detail.

Ms. Barber added that it was nice to have just one page, or look further and see the details. It seems like we are not spinning our wheels because we can see everything we have accomplished, and it makes it feel like all the hard work is not in vain.

Mr. Sharif said that it was also good to have documentation in case constituents say, 'where is the money going?' and you can look back on the list and say, here is what we have done.

Ms. Barber agreed, and said most people won't read 50- or 100-page reports, they want a synopsis of what happened. Ms. Barber repeated that she appreciated all of everyone's hard work daily, and everyone behind the dais who volunteers their time to stand up for the town that we know and love, and our people who we love and want to retain.

Ms. Sheffield said the East/North/Holly project is mentioned as an average priority, but she knows these are projects that are not only roadway improvements, but also underground utilities. They are bigger projects than just making the roadways more accommodating to residents. So, even though those are bigger projects that we will work towards, she wondered if we could set funds aside to make the roads nicer in the meantime because we have gotten a lot of complaints about them.

Mr. Klein replied, of course, and those have just been added since our last budget meeting. We will get estimates for them, if they are not included in the 5-yr Capital Improvement Plan for complete reconstruction, we will have a maintenance plan for those roads.

Ms. Sheffield said she did see 10K allotted for street repairs. The only other questions she had were, looking at some of the line items, she was not sure what fell under contract services and administrative charges as those numbers have gone up.

Mr. Klein explained that administrative charges included things like copies, auditing, casualty insurance; there is a formula used where each department pays the general fund a proportionate share of those costs, it's an analysis that has to be done by all cities. In terms of contractual services, it depends on where in the budget you are looking. It could be IT, or some other type of service.

Ms. Muenz offered an example. The part-time court clerk left, and Judge Bradshaw-Napper was utilizing non-employee contract clerks provided by neighboring court offices temporarily.

Mr. Klein added that if we were to utilize Clarkdale's grant writer, that would also fall under contract services.

Mr. Sharif asked if we were going to put something out there towards increasing parking, possibly later if not now. He thought increasing the parking costs would help bring money in, because the money flows either from people living here's taxes, tourists, and then parking. Mr. Sharif said, looking at trying to offset and bring in funding, that is something he would like to consider.

Mr. Klein replied that it would be a policy decision.

Ms. Barber asked when it was changed from 4 to 5 dollars.

Mr. Klein said it was last year.

Ms. Barber said we usually wait a couple of years before increasing it, but she does not mind having the discussion to increase it, or why we should or should not increase it.

Dr. Dillenberg said he was curious as to how we compare [in cost] to other communities and Mr. Sharif replied that we are low.

Dr. Dillenberg said raising it a dollar would not be a big deal; it was not excessive.

Ms. Barber agreed it was not excessive.

Ms. Sheffield mentioned that before Chief San Felice took over, we had a conversation about having a committee to talk before raising parking, which is obviously the quickest way for us to generate additional income. He would be willing to sit and help accommodate some of the residents and locals, who get a little miffed already to pay 5 dollars. Before we did that, I would like to remind him that we were going to have those conversations. Ms. Sheffield said she was also curious about who makes the decisions on the kiosks that we purchase.

Mr. Klein said it is mostly a staff decision, but the council appropriate the funds that Chief San Felice has requested.

Ms. Sheffield said she would say one last thing about parking, and that is she was in Flagstaff, and they had text-to-park. She noticed they had different rates for different amounts of time, and she would like to see if we could maybe tailor a fee for a certain amount of time rather than all day, because she paid \$8 for 2 hours, and if she wanted 4 or 5 hours like we offer here, she would have paid \$20. If we did something like that, there is a possibility for people who are just running into town to check in into their jobs, or have a bite to eat, 1 hour minimal. That would probably help some residents instead of paying \$5 when they are only going to be there an hour; they could pay \$2, and visitors that are going to stay longer could pay more.

Mr. Klein explained there would be an administrative cost due to oversight added by all the charges and he was not confident we could do that.

Mr. Sharif commented that no, that's why it's in the plan right now, because they fell out of warranty. With the new machines, we can apply codes. So, for you or anybody, there could be a town code that you could put in. However, Mr. Sharif said he would be leery because it could be one of those things... Ms. Sheffield said the code could be passed around.

Exactly, responded Mr. Sharif. He said, if you love the town and we're trying to get money for the town, it's not against you or anybody else here, but there's always these rules that we put into place. If we don't want to increase it because people will be upset, go to New York city where it's \$80 to park. If we need funding, there are things we need to do. To Ms. Sheffield's point he said, if we upgrade, we will be able to do it, and can have those discussions about how we want to build it. That is one of the things we are going to look into, how to provide more funding than we are getting today. Absolutely, to give a code to give a discount or freebie that's where you start to get in it because people like to share and give discounts to others. Knowing that we need funding, how are we going to get it? Mr. Sharif said he agreed, and is not saying no, but it is something we definitely need to look into. He added that he wouldn't just go a dollar, he would go higher because we need it but we need new machines.

Ms. Moore asked if there isn't an issue with smaller amounts, and more of them, with an increase in credit card fees.

Mr. Klein confirmed it is per transaction, so if there are more of them, we would be looking at a spike in third party processing fees.

Ms. Moore agreed that was what she meant, and added that we also need to look at costs for the time it takes to look at people parking and for how long.

Ms. Barber agreed, and said right now it's all day [pay-to-park], and if you don't have the slip in your window, you get a ticket. To have more detail than that could be burdensome for the staff that we have.

Ms. Sheffield said that is why conversations with Chief San Felice could be beneficial.

Mr. Klein said that he could see us eventually doing 2, such as 4-hour and 8-hour.

Ms. Barber asked if the 4-hour limit would be the \$5 cost we have now, and we could do \$8 hours for 8 hours, with the extra \$3 to cover the extra staff time. She said she thought we had it set to all-day was because of staff time. She added that the credit card fees went up pretty high and then we got them down, so are we checking to make sure we have the best deal?

Mr. Klein said yes, they are up because our revenue is up, which will always be the case, but they are the best.

Mr. Sharif added that some cards charge more too. He asked Ms. Sheffield about timing, and she said she was not sure, she had only a brief conversation with Chief San Felice and at the time, he was busy.

Ms. Sheffield said that she would make it a priority to speak with him again.

Ms. Barber asked if we were going to have further discussions on new kiosks and break it down to different costs? She stated that she did not feel we should drop it at all, she thinks we do what Mr. Sharif said and raise it.

Dr. Dillenberg said, yes, I agree.

Mr. Sharif said you can see the numbers, if you look at the numbers for the kiosks, you'll see them rise. He added that he does believe there should be some kind of tiering. But, he repeated, tourists are money, taxes are money, and if we aren't going to bring more human beings to get tax money from the state, we need to find other avenues.

Ms. Sheffield said her last comment on it is that any given day, chances are we are going to have a dozen residents come up. It will not be a large percentage of parking going to residents, it will just give them an option. She said, from personal experience, it is not convenient to pay for parking when you're only going to be in town for an hour.

Mr. Sharif said he agreed.

Ms. Sheffield said she has paid for parking many a time, and has also been ticketed for taking too long running in and out.

Mr. Klein said that a \$1 increase is very easy obviously, but all the other variables could take some time in our budget talks. He suggested starting the conversation again in September for the next budget. Mr. Klein said the next copy of the budget we see will be nearly final, but if you give input for us to raise it a dollar or two, as it stands now, we can change it at any time. He said it sounds like a change will be coming and it will help add revenue and the budget if we put something in there, even if it's a conservative \$1 increase.

Dr. Dillenberg asked, the parking we have now at the 300 level, do people pay to park there?

Ms. Barber responded, no.

Dr. Dillenberg asked why we don't have it for residents.

Ms. Barber replied that they don't want to walk that far, they want to pull up in front to go to a restaurant. To Dr. Dillenberg she said, there is more unpaid parking than paid parking, you can come up to Jerome at 9 a.m. and park wherever you want. It's when you come up at 1 p.m. and the town is full of tourists that you have park in other areas and walk. Ms. Barber said that she agreed to let the tourists fund this, but wanted to say about the locals, some are older and can't walk down from where she parks when she comes into town. She said she never pays to park because she finds places, even if it's far down, and walks up. Ms. Barber said that her father does not have the agility to do the same, so he pays to park and he has complained to me as the Mayor. Her own father, and she said, "Jerry, we're trying to make some money for the town." We need to have the tourists help us, 400 people can do a small amount, compared to 2 million people. So, she said she thinks the consensus behind this dais is that we raise it a little. She thanked Mr. Klein and said it can always be tweaked, and it always can be changed, but raising it to \$1 is not a huge sum.

Mr. Sharif said Ms. Barber was right, but to Ms. Sheffield's point, is there something we can do to identify a resident? He said he has a sticker, so he can pull up and you can see it.

Ms. Sheffield said, right, and that is why she wants to talk to Chief San Felice. What she believes could be possible to in the system for the kiosks, to flag certain plates as a resident or non-resident. So, the parking attendant could go through and instead of just flagging if they've paid or not paid, also identify a resident. Again, she said it was a very introductory conversation, and she will make a priority to speak to him again.

Ms. Barber suggested that Ms. Sheffield could then bring that information to the council at the next budget meeting. She said, we've talked about special permits, we've talked about other options, but we have to be careful because if we give [free passes] to one group, we have to give it to all groups, and then we are giving it to everyone. It's money that the town needs. Ms. Barber said that the more people that drive on the roads, and the more people that are flushing the toilets, look at the budget [pointing to the list of needed repairs] we have wastewater in here, we have every single road in here. She said, it is a community in need.

Ms. Moore said we have talked before about having the shuttle run more during the week. Residents could park at the big parking lot and come into town. How much would that cost? We could look at that as well. And, she added, for people who work in town, they could also park there and get a ride into town. Ms. Moore said that some people don't want to do that either.

Dr. Dillenberg voiced agreement.

Ms. Barber agreed as well, and said that right now, the shuttle runs on weekends and holidays. So, if we had it for more, she wasn't sure if we could cover the entire week with our budget, but we could do as much as we can. If you don't want to park out there because you can't walk, having someone who



can give you a ride makes it where you can park out there. Ms. Barber said she was not trying to hurt any residents; she is trying to help the town not fall apart.

Ms. Sheffield said that if we don't have to take residents into consideration when it comes to paid parking, raising the paid parking enough so the visitors are paying for the residents to have parking is possible. Rather than raising it \$1 for everyone, because based on what other places are charging to park, it is not unreasonable for our parking to cost more.

Mr. Sharif and Ms. Barber voiced agreements.

Ms. Sheffield continued, it is creating a feeling of resentment and entitlement because people feel like, 'if I live here and I'm one of only 300 people, then why do I have to pay to park?' Ms. Sheffield said she hears it a lot, and she gets it. She said she has learned how to work around it, but it is something that is easy to fuss about. She said, we could tack on \$3 to the visitors if we could accommodate the residents is some way, shape, or form.

Mr. Sharif said he is all for it and Ms. Sheffield is 100% right. If the residents pay for all this, how do we flip it? That is what the discussion is, and if we can do it. He said to Ms. Sheffield, if you talk to the Chief and if it can go into the system now and we agree on an increase, then we are golden. Then, when the new system comes out, we find out where we are at. He said he gets where residents are at, but the simple fact that no one wants to hear is that the town needs the money. He reiterated, not from the residents, but still needs the money. So, for those that grumble, you are not getting your property tax increased. Because we don't increase the property tax like normal towns do, it is a benefit to us, but it also hurts the physical town. For the few that grumble, your town is falling apart, so we are trying to find the right ways to go about it. He said he understands, and he thinks we can do something about it. Mr. Sharif suggested perhaps creating a new tag for only residents. He said we are trying to survive.

Ms. Barber agreed and said that there are 3 top things to do in Arizona. One is the Grand Canyon and the last time she checked it was \$20 per carload. Number two is Sedona, and they are at least \$8 for the first couple of hours. Then they get to Jerome, and it is only \$5. They do not have a problem with that, so she thinks that to make it more is absolutely something we should do. We are not trying to hurt residents; we are trying to help them. The best way we can continue to get money that we need for much needed improvements, maintenance, and not hurt are residents, she is all for it.

Dr. Dillenberg asked if there is anything we need to do now, such as set a dollar amount.

Ms. Moore said no, just direction.

Ms. Barber agreed that we will talk about it more for the next budget. She asked if there was anything else from staff or council and there was none.

Dr. Dillenberg moved to adjourn the meeting, and Ms. Barber seconded the motion.

### 3. ADJOURNMENT

#### Motion to adjourn at 5:52 P.M.

COUNCILMEMBER	MOTION	SECOND	AYE	NAY	ABSENT	ABSTAIN
BARBER		X	X			
DILLENBERG	X		X			
MOORE			X			
SHARIF			X			
SHEFFIELD			X			

APPROVE:

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Alex Barber, Mayor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Brett Klein, Town Manager